

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

"HUMANE" ACTS

The humane treatment and handling of the mentally ill has long been accepted by the public consciousness and given public approval.

But there are still laws on statute books that do not take into full account this modern approach and which are not humane "acts."

It is heartening to be able to say that this problem is being seriously attacked. HEW's National Institute of Mental Health is providing information, advice,

and consultation on request, to state and local authorities and organizations.

Following recommendations and requests, a major new project is now under way, with NIMH contracting for the preparation of a legislative guide for the development of state mental health and mental retardation laws. The guide will help states draft new laws or amend those now in effect.

Today, many communities and states are working on the problem and are beginning to solve it.

An outstanding example is found in the state of Florida, where a new and humane act, the Florida Mental Health (Baker) act became effective in July 1972.

In by-gone days, here is what the mental patient could usually expect:

Handcuffs or other restraints, and a ride in a caged police car; a court appearance to determine "competency or incompetency," with little in-between; he was court-committed, a likely layover in jail until his number reached the top of a long waiting list caused by strained facilities; and once in the hospital, good treatment but an uncertain future.

Procedures under the new law differ sharply, but are basically simple: the mental patient elects to enter a hospital as he would with appendicitis or a broken leg; mental illness is not regarded differently and human rights are respected.

At the hospital the patient can expect immediate and thorough treatment by expert medical teams; telephone calls and visits; two-way unconsented mail; a personal representative; voting privileges in public elections; confidentiality of all clinical records; and established periods for re-examination and hearings aimed at the earliest possible return to his family and friends.

Sound and progressive laws like Florida's are the new order of our times. They prove, moreover, to be both economically feasible and practical—and truly humane "acts."

In October 1972, nearly 800,000 adults age 35 and over were enrolled in college, the Labor department reports. Over half of them — or 53 per cent — were women.



By M. E. GARDNER
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"I will sell you a cord of wood for \$50.00." When you hear that you know the energy crisis is upon us and people are concerned about keeping warm this winter. I expect that more wood will be burned this winter than at any time in our history.

The top had blown out of an oak in my neighbor's yard. A next door neighbor agreed to let the tree for the wood. He got it.

A friend removed a large limb from an oak and converted it into two pick-up truck loads of firewood.

A young couple was building a new home in a rural area. To make room for the house, it was necessary to fell two large oaks. They planned to convert the trees into fire wood for two fireplaces in the new home. But, in the meantime, some "Good Samaritans" slipped in, sawed the trees and hauled the wood away. And so it goes.

Since the prospects for large quantities of wood ashes is indicated, perhaps some suggestions about the use of wood ashes in the vegetable flower and fruit gardens will be helpful.

Wood ashes contain about 45 per cent calcium carbonate (a form of lime), about 5 to 10 per cent potash and about 2 per cent phosphorus. You can see that

they do have some fertilizer value because of the major plant food elements (P&K) are present; only nitrogen (N) is absent. This element can be easily supplied as a side dressing. In addition to the lime, potash and phosphorus, there are also present small quantities of the minor or trace elements such as iron and manganese.

Wood ashes should be collected and stored in a dry place. If they are piled outside and exposed to the weather, they will lose much of their nutrient value due to leaching by rain water. If you do not wish to store the ashes for soil application, they can be added to the compost pile as collected.

We should consider wood ashes as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, the regular fertilizer program. This waste from the burning process can best be used for the root and bulb crops, fruit trees and grape vines. It may also be used in the annual and perennial flower beds. The use around azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons and blueberries is questionable because of the relatively high calcium content. These plants like an acid soil.

How much to use? About one good shovel per square yard of soil area. Mix well with the soil.

Horse Owners Are Urged "Use Test"

North Carolina State University animal health experts are urging Tar Heel horse owners to use a new test for equine infectious anamia (swamp fever) to keep this disease in check.

Dr. Robert F. Behlow, NCSU extension veterinarian, said the Coggins test "is an excellent diagnostic tool" for EIA. The test is made at a diagnostic laboratory from a blood sample collected by a veterinarian.

Diagnosis of EIA from visual examination of the horse is often difficult. Dr. Behlow said the acute form of the disease can be confused with anthrax, influenza, equine encephalitis, horse tick fever or other fever-producing diseases.

An animal with EIA will have a sudden rise in temperature from normal 100 degrees to 105 or higher. Fever attacks may be intermittent or continuous. The animal may sweat, breath rapidly and appear depressed. Usually, it loses weight although it continues to eat. Eyes are bloodshot with a slight watery discharge. Urination is frequent, and diarrhea may occur. There may be swelling in the legs and lower part of the body. Weakness causes a wobbly or rolling gait.

It is possible that your horse could become infected, show only a few of the visible signs of infection and continue to have for years. In fact, some animals with the virus in their blood never show any signs of the disease.

They represent a potential source of infection for all horses around them.

The acute form of the disease usually lasts three to five days and, occasionally, the first attack is fatal. More often, infected animals have severe attacks before they die.

EIA is spread by biting insects, such as flies and mosquitoes, and by unsterilized surgical or tattooing instruments. The virus may even be transmitted by tack used on infected animals.

Dr. Behlow said horse owners should take steps that will reduce the risk of EIA. These include sterilization of instruments used in working with animals, keeping barns and stalls clean, controlling insects, using a tack for each horse where possible, isolating all new horses and using the Coggins test if the disease is suspected.

The NCSU veterinarian cautioned horse owners that the Coggins test is required for ani-

mals shipped into some states. The time period varies. North Carolina requires that horses brought into the state have a Coggins test within six months of date of arrival. Some states require tests within 60 days.

Winn-Dixie Notes Increase In Sales

An increase of 23.10 per cent in sales was reported by Winn-Dixie supermarkets during the four weeks ended Nov. 17 compared with the same period last year.

The volume totaled \$1,111,183, an increase of \$34,902,346. For the 20 weeks ended Nov. 17, sales were \$1,130,882 compared with \$788,707-101, an increase of \$154,422,711 or \$20.90 per cent.

The company currently operated 950 food stores compared with 894 a year ago.

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